



FAIRFAX COUNTY
FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT
STRATEGIC PLAN

FY 2003-2006

Message from the Fire Chief

Organizational strategic focus is important to the success of any planning process. One of the challenges facing the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department (FRD) is that there is more to be done, by members of the Department and other key stakeholders, than the Department has the resources to accomplish.

Often, the temptation to do everything can lead organizations to try to be all things to all people. This approach can result in not doing anything particularly well. In other words, if everything is important, nothing is important or takes priority. Strategic planning is the counterpoint to the “all things are important syndrome.”

Strategic planning in its simplest form is about identifying a limited number of key strategic goals to be achieved by the organization in order to move it successfully into the future.

Defining a strategic focus began by identifying what the Department currently does and how well it functions. We recognize that our organization provides a broad range of programs and services in Fairfax County. The important aspect of strategic planning, however, is that it builds on the organization’s strengths and moves it to a new level. The planning process enabled us to assess the goals needed in the future to enhance the organization, its services, and its role as a leader in the national fire and rescue service.



This strategic direction is not about maintaining business as usual; it is about change.

The Department’s Strategic Plan is constructed with a framework of three fundamental building blocks:

A Vision Statement

A Mission Statement

Eight Core Values

This framework is complemented by three strategic goals:

Capacity Development

Integration into and Education of the Community

Influence Public Policy Formulation and Implementation

This document details these accomplishments and outlines the efforts we need to take to maintain a forward-looking, strategic focus. I have designated a group of individuals drawn from the original Strategic Planning Facilitation Group (SPFG) to continue the coordination of the process. This team’s new name is the Planning Leadership Team. As with the original group, it includes representatives from all shifts, divisions, and interests within the Department.

I invite you to become active participants as our organization implements its strategic plan.

Edward L. Stinnette

Background

In June 2001, the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department (FRD) initiated a strategic planning process to develop the Department's long-range strategic direction. The plan is intended to provide a focus for decision-making, work initiatives, and to ensure the continued sustainability and excellence of the services provided by the Department to the citizens of Fairfax County.

The Department convened a core group of 16 individuals who served as the Strategic Planning Facilitation Group (SPFG). This group included members of the Department's senior leadership and representatives of a cross-section of individuals representing FRD's program areas, various ranks and job classifications, and work assignments. Representatives of the employee groups, including the Officers' Association, the local chapter of the International Association of Firefighters and Paramedics, the Progressive Firefighters, the Volunteer Fire Commission, and civilians, were included to ensure that all viewpoints were considered. Neil Porta, President of Context Consulting, facilitated the process.



The Process

In October 2001, the Department hosted a three-day planning retreat involving 42 members. This dedicated group began to map the future for our organization. This effort involved intense teamwork and consensus building resulting in the development of new vision and mission statements and the adoption of a set of core values. Our common vision, mission, and core values are the principles that guide our actions and decisions.

With the information provided from previous interviews and focus groups, the retreat participants were able to identify the strategic issues facing the Department over the next three to five years and to develop a broad set of strategic goals. The group also advanced 12 Department-wide strategies for achieving these goals over that same period.

In January 2002, a second retreat was conducted. It involved the original 42 members and 38 additional members were added. The goal was to broaden the participation to include section leaders and others who would be tasked to implement the specific action steps to achieve the objectives outlined in the FY 2003 Operational Plan.

The Outcome

This document is a summation of the outcomes of these two retreats and the extensive effort resulting from the initial year's work. It is a document that represents the consensus of all retreat participants over nine months of intensive discussion, dialogue, and effort. This strategic plan articulates the elements that will define the framework for the Department's future. This document answers the broad scope of issues regarding the future direction of the Department within the context of the following questions:

- ☐ What does the Department want to become?
- ☐ What is the Department's role in our community?
- ☐ What principles will the Department employ as an organization to pursue its strategic and operational goals?
- ☐ What is the timeline for this plan?
- ☐ What broad strategic issues will provide the basis for the decisions during this timeframe?
- ☐ What strategies are needed to facilitate the implementation of the strategic issues?



What Does the Department Want to Become?

The first step of this strategic planning process was to define the Department's vision statement. As a result of prior planning exercises, the Department had several statements intended to define its organizational purpose, but none of the existing statements captured the vision of the organization. An effective vision statement defines what the organization is striving to become, how that effort will be accomplished, and for whom it is to be directed. The adopted vision statement for the Department is:

Dedicated to being the best community-focused Fire and Rescue Department working as a team to ensure a safe and secure environment for all those entrusted to our care.

This vision includes four basic components:

How?	Dedication and teamwork
What?	Community-focused
Why?	Ensuring a safe and secure environment through all aspects of the fire service
For Whom?	All those entrusted to our care

What Is the Department's Role in Our Community?

The reason the Fire and Rescue Department exists is defined in its mission statement. It takes the broad elements from the vision statement and elaborates on how the organization functions as an organization and the services and roles it fills in the community. As a result of the strategic planning process, a new mission statement was adopted. The new mission statement is:

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department is committed to providing emergency and non-emergency services to protect the lives, property, and environment of our community. We contribute to this commitment by:

- ☐ Maintaining a leadership role in local, state, and national public safety initiatives.
- ☐ Developing, implementing, and maintaining innovative prevention programs and strategies, life safety education, and training for our community.
- ☐ Maintaining the highest departmental readiness to provide emergency medical and fire suppression services.
- ☐ Maintaining state-of-the-art special operations capabilities.
- ☐ Seeking new and better ways to further integrate the Fire and Rescue Department into our communities.
- ☐ Conducting research and using technology to enhance the achievement of these objectives.

What Principles Will the Department Employ as an Organization to Pursue Its Strategic and Operational Goals?

Every organization is defined by the core values that forms the foundation against which decision-making occurs. Each value is intertwined with its counterparts. The essence of an organization's effectiveness is how it stands up and lives by its values. During this strategic planning effort, we adopted eight core values. While these values may have been assumed, they had never before been specifically articulated and defined. These are the **core values** of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department.



Professional Excellence

We believe the pursuit of excellence and demonstrating high professional standards are critical to our work. To ensure the best possible service for our community, the Fire and Rescue Department supports continuous training and encourages professional development.

Health and Safety

We believe our health and safety are essential to fulfilling the Fire and Rescue Department's mission. We are committed to providing the best health and safety programs for our members' well-being and operational readiness.

Diversity

We know Fairfax County is a diverse community and we commit to meeting its ever-changing needs. We are dedicated to reflecting and respecting that diversity throughout our organization, and to respecting diversity by providing compassionate and quality service to all.

Teamwork and Shared Leadership

We know well-functioning teams of people are more effective than individuals working separately; our lives depend on it. We believe individuals have the capacity to lead, and our organization values leadership at all levels. Teamwork and shared leadership are integral to our organization, and we will seek out and value the opinions of our members.



Effective Communication

We believe communication is essential to the cohesiveness and performance of our organization. We are committed to providing effective and responsive means of communication throughout the organization and the community.

Integrity

We understand the trust placed in us by the public and our colleagues is integral to the performance of our duties. We are committed to honest and ethical behavior, and will hold ourselves accountable to these values.

Community Service and Involvement

We believe we have a duty to be involved in the communities where we work. Our responsibility is to protect life, property, and the environment. We are committed to fulfilling our responsibility and to deepening our involvement in the community we serve. No request or inquiry will go unanswered.

Innovation

We recognize and understand that the constancy of change in our community and industry impacts our business daily. We are committed to seeking out and implementing innovative and progressive thinking to address change effectively, benefiting those we serve.

What Is the Timeframe for This Plan and How Was It Determined?

A strategic planning process is designed to look beyond the immediate future to a planning horizon. The planning horizon defined for the Department's Strategic Plan is three to five years. The process of arriving at this timeframe required the participants to examine the Department's anticipated operating environment five to ten years ahead and beyond. The effort involved looking at key external and internal trends and what those trends represent for the Department's future. In addition, it forced the organization to examine its strengths and weaknesses given its current developmental needs, as well as the opportunities and threats to the organization from external factors. This process, called a SWOT analysis, was conducted by surveying over a hundred Department members and by sponsoring five focus group meetings.

From this analysis, the group determined that rapidly changing needs, demographics, and fiscal issues limited efforts to project beyond a five-year horizon. In addition, the group decided to use this first planning horizon as a basis for long-term strategic initiatives.



What Broad Strategic Issues Will Be Addressed During This Timeframe?

The organization has defined three broad strategic issues. These strategic issues represent the three focal points for the strategic plan.

The first strategic issue is **Capacity Development**. Capacity development is an internal strategic goal which will be measured by an increased capacity within the Department to effectively address the life safety, property, and environmental protection needs of our community. Demands for services defined in the Department's mission statement impact personnel, equipment, facilities, training, and morale. In order for the Department to make progress toward its vision, these internal issues must be addressed.

The second strategic issue is **Integration into and Education of Fairfax County Community**. This strategic goal will be measured by increased favorable attitudes and perceptions on the part of our community toward the Department from which responsive community and political support of the Department's operations will emerge. This goal directs the organization toward the external relationships needed for the Department to be an effective community partner.

The third strategic issue is to **Influence Public Policy Formulation and Implementation**. This strategic goal will be measured by increased favorable attitudes and perceptions on the part of national, state, and local organizations toward the Fire and Rescue Department, which will increase our ability to exert greater influence over the policies affecting our organization. The Department is recognized around the world as one of the leaders in the fire service. The organization is used as a benchmark against which other departments measure their success. The mission and vision of the Department are closely tied to maintaining and enhancing this role. This goal directs the organization to strive to stay at the top of our field.

What Strategies Are Needed To Facilitate the Implementation of the Strategic Issues?

Once these broad strategic issues were identified, the planning group articulated 12 long-term strategies to be undertaken by the Department over the next three to five years. These long-term strategies directly relate to one or more of the three strategic issues. The strategies are listed below:



- ☐ Articulate and promote the Fire and Rescue Department's vision, mission, core values, and strategic goals both internally and externally.
 - ☐ Develop and implement an organizational structure to ensure the achievement of the Fire and Rescue Department's strategic goals.
 - ☐ Develop and submit proposals to increase front-line and support staff, fully equip reserve apparatus, and the facilities to accommodate these needs.
 - ☐ Enhance formal career paths, education, and experience requirements to improve readiness, leadership development, and succession for uniformed and non-uniformed members.
-
- ☐ Develop and submit proposals to improve information technology infrastructure and information management support staffing.
 - ☐ Develop new tools to inform and educate the public about the Department's work and to enlist public engagement in, and support for, our activities
 - ☐ Provide enhanced education, training tools, and delivery methods, both within our organization and in the Fairfax County community, designed to improve the Department's capacity to achieve its objectives with a high standard of excellence.

- ❑ Develop consistent communications capability between our Department and its stakeholders to ensure the following:
 - Better emergency response.
 - Common understanding of, and commitment to, the Department's strategic goals.
 - Adequate information sharing to support achievement of the Department's strategic goals.
 - Comprehensive stakeholder involvement in the shaping and implementation of the strategic plans.
 - Greater teamwork and esprit de corps throughout the organization.
- ❑ Develop and promote organizational and service models to unify the Department.
- ❑ Develop a marketing and public relations orientation within the Department to build community based support and understanding of our vision and mission.
- ❑ Develop partnerships with other organizations to strengthen our capacity to achieve the Department's strategic goals.
- ❑ Develop and promote models to effectively address the equal opportunity concerns of the Department and its members.

FY 2003 Operational Plan

The final phase of the Strategic Planning Process was to define specific areas for action within each of the strategic issues. The second planning retreat participants identified and prioritized a list of 42 specific goals. These are defined in the FY 2003 Operational Plan.

The FY 2003 Operational Plan recognizes that the strategic area of Capacity Development needs the most attention. This internal focus is necessary for the Department to achieve the intent of the broad planning process. Therefore, the Operational Plan focuses the efforts and energy of the Department in six broad areas. Each of these areas were specifically verified during the planning process as being tied to the newly articulated vision and mission statements of the Department. The specific goal areas for Capacity Development are defined in six core functions:

- ❑ Equipment and Staffing
- ❑ Facilities
- ❑ Education, Career Development, and the Fire Academy



- ☐ Internal Communications
- ☐ Intradepartmental Divisions
- ☐ Morale

In addition, the FY 2003 Operational Plan includes goal areas for the two external goals of Integration and Education of the Fairfax Community and Influencing Public Policy Formation. The core functional areas of the Operational Plan address two broad functions:

- ☐ External Communication
- ☐ Planning, Outreach, and Tracking

A detailed list of each of the 42 Operational Goals is available from the Planning Section. Individual work groups and teams have been identified with action plans for each of these goals and a full report of the Department's movement toward the achievement of the Operational Plan will be issued in July 2003.

What Does Strategic Planning Signify for the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department?

The creation of a strategic plan and its successful implementation signals the leadership's desire to lead the Department using a formal strategic orientation. Developing this strategic plan represents a commitment to the future and it involves an understanding that planning is an on-going process.

The strategic plan, and the direction it provides, defines what is best for the Department given the expected, or future, operating aspects of the organization. The strategic direction represents a compass to be used by the Department to guide its future decision-making and on-going operational work.



Updating the Plan

The strategic plan for the Department covers three to five years, and the operating plan is for FY 2003. An initial plan of action was developed for the first quarter of FY 2003, and the Department will conduct quarterly reviews to assess actual departmental performance against the operating plan, and plan the following quarters accordingly.

Annually, an Operational Plan for the Department will be developed using this framework. The Operational Plan is a specific set of goals targeted for work to be accomplished within a one-year time frame. Each goal has a contact person who was part of the initial planning process. The goal contact will develop a working team of individuals to work on the targeted goal during the course of the year. Quarterly updates will be provided to the Planning Leadership Team. Recommendations resulting from the goals will be reviewed and addressed within a continuous planning cycle.

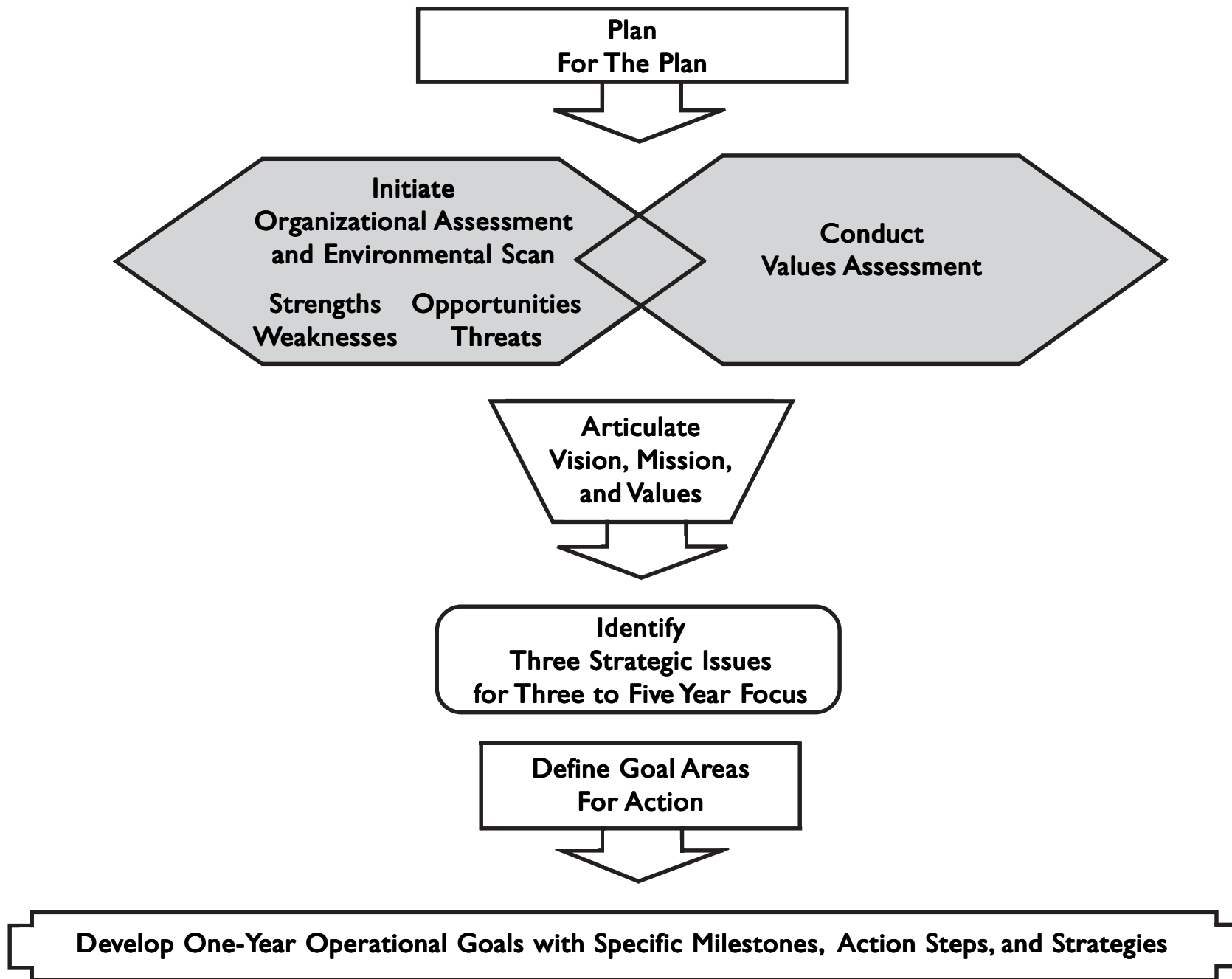
Each year the Department intends to assemble the larger group of stakeholders and retreat participants to review what has been accomplished and to define the Operational Plan for the subsequent year.



The Department's strategic plan exists in an environment that is constantly changing. It is the Department leadership's working document, and as such, it details how the organization should move forward in that changing environment. Therefore, the leadership has a right and a responsibility to the following actions to ensure the continuation of the planning process:

- ☐ Update the broad strategic plan at least every three years based on sound assessment of the state of the Department and the continuously changing environment.
- ☐ Update the operating plan goals on an annual basis.
- ☐ Assess operating performance against the plan, and update the operating plan action steps, on a quarterly basis.







"As I continue to address our strategic planning process with each of you, I want everyone to understand the importance of the framework that the strategic planning document has provided. The strategic planning document identifies the key components as being our vision, our mission statement, and our statement of core values. These components are the foundation for achieving service with excellence. Each of our values reinforce what we stand for, who we are, and why we're the best at what we do."

Chief Edward L. Stinnette



Acknowledgements

The Fire and Rescue Department wishes to thank the following individuals for their support of the strategic planning process:

County Executive Anthony H. Griffin

Deputy County Executive Robert Stalzer

The following members of the Department participated in putting together this Strategic Plan. Without the input and efforts of every member of the Department who participated in focus groups, individual interviews, surveys, and the retreats, we could not have reached this stage of the plan.

Sharon Arndt

Technician Bill Atwell

Deputy Chief Dereck Baker

Master Technician David Bender

Lieutenant William Best

Battalion Chief Ed Brinkley

Captain I Karen Brinkley

Lieutenant Tracy Brinkley

Battalion Chief John Burke

Captain II Ed Burlingame

Captain I Lawrence “Mike” Carter

Captain II John Caussin

Deputy Chief Jeffrey Coffman

Captain II Dean Cox

Gino Crump

Erick Davila

Captain II Michael Deli

Patricia Devlin

Captain II John Diamantes

Captain II Duane Dodwell

Deputy Chief Jeffrey Donaldson

Captain II Bob Dube

Captain I Lionel Duckwitz

Captain II Garrett Dyer

Andrew Eastman

Paula Ferrer

Lieutenant Colin Flanigan

Volunteer Chief Tim Fleming

Captain I Danny Gray

Lieutenant Barry Harlowe

Susan Herbert

Kathleen Hurley

Battalion Chief Barry Jacobs

Nell Rose Jarvis

Captain I Gerald “Jazz” Jaskulski

Captain II Kevin Kincaid

Battalion Chief Daryl Louder

Lieutenant Craig Luecke

Deputy Chief Clark Martin

Deputy Chief Carl Maurice

Captain II David McKernan

Robert Mizer

Captain I R. Michael Mohler

Assistant Chief Michael Neuhard

Captain II Mike O’Connor

Technician Piers Osborne

Allan Pearson

Battalion Chief Dewey Perks

Captain II Gary Pope

Captain II Charles “Pete” Pullen

Captain II Chris Raabe

Lieutenant Natalie Robb

Deputy Chief David Rohr

Captain II Mark Rohr

Technician Carolyn Ruwe

Captain II Jeff Sager

Daniel Schmidt

Debbie Showalter

Battalion Chief Andrew Snead

Fire Chief Edward Stinnette

Lieutenant Mark Stone

Captain II Richard Sweatt

Battalion Chief Michael Tamillow

Captain I Anne Tennant

Lieutenant Adam Thiel

Captain II Clayton Thompson

Captain I Glenn Tschann

Technician Rodney Vaughan

Lieutenant Lee Warner

Assistant Chief Mark Wheatley

Captain II Tim Williams

Al Woolf

Firefighter Colleen Wuckovich

Lieutenant Tim Young

Captain II Richard Yuras

Neil Porta, Consultant,

Context Consulting, Inc

Those members in italics served as members of the Strategic Planning Facilitation Group.



Fairfax County Employee Vision “Shaping the Future”

As Fairfax County government employees, we are committed to excellence in our work. We celebrate public service, anticipate changing needs, and respect diversity. In partnership with the community, we shape the future.

As Fairfax County Employees:

- ☐ We inspire integrity, pride, trust, and respect within our organization.
- ☐ We encourage employee involvement and creativity as a source of new ideas to continuously improve services.
- ☐ As stewards of community resources, we embrace the opportunities and challenges of technological advances, evolving demographics, urbanization, revitalization, and the changing role of government.

We Commit Ourselves to These Guiding Principles:

- ☐ Providing Superior Services
- ☐ Valuing Our Workforce
- ☐ Respecting Diversity
- ☐ Communicating Openly and Consistently
- ☐ Building Community Partnerships





This document can be found on our website www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire.